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Analysis of Meaning, Content and Style: poetry
from the Federated States of Micronesia
and Palau

By Kimberly Kay Au
Plan B paper

The field of Micronesian literature is still in a stage of infancy, compared to literature from the South Pacific. There is a substantial amount of post WW II literature from Micronesia, although there is not as much as in the South Pacific. Mark Skinner's Contemporary Micronesian Literature: A Preliminary Bibliography, a valuable compilation of about 800 works published in the post WW II era by 400 indigenous and non-indigenous writers is evidence of this (Skinner 1990:1).

One reason why there is not as much work out of Micronesia compared to the South Pacific is because of the lack of promotion of creative writing in Micronesia. It is primarily because of the effort of certain individuals at various schools in the region that creative writing has developed as much as it has. Neither the Trust Territory nor the Government of Guam education departments actively encouraged creative writing. Another contributing factor is the lack of funding for publishing. (Skinner 1990:2-4).

Although literary works from Micronesia are less polished and sophisticated than works from the South Pacific, they are nevertheless a creative form of expression and feeling worthy of study. Currently, very little research is being done in this particular field. Mark Skinner's bibliography is a compilation of Micronesian literature, but no one has delved into the actual works themselves.

This paper shall be breaking into "virgin territory", for in it I will be analyzing the content, form, structure and meaning of various poems from the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.

It is important to point out that there is an unequal distribution of literature from the various entities of the FSM (Yap, Truk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae), for the majority of the works comes from Truk. The reason that I have selected the poetry from the FSM and Palau is because I am examining the poetry from the entities comprising the former Trust Territory. I have declined to include the poetry from the Marianas because the body of literature is completely different, as well as its colonial history.

In order to understand literary evolution, which is part of a larger cultural process, we must delve into the structure and meaning of the literature, as well as the context in which it evolves. As Subramani has noted:

Literature as a form of consciousness is intricately linked with a variety of historical, cultural and political factors, and it draws its structures, imagery and rhetoric from the total socio-historical environment. (Subramani 1985:4)

Literature evolves according to certain principles in dialectical interaction with history and society, and through its own inner dynamism and logic. The study outlines a critical dialectical model in which the literature is shown developing from a stage of reaction and confrontation (polemic against colonialism), towards adjustment and synthesis through groping for an adequate vision of the changed reality brought about by historical processes such as colonialism, democratisation of traditional societies, literacy and Western education. (Subramani 1985:152).

In other words, history and the social structure shape literature, which in turn effects history and the social structure, but to a lesser extent. The structure of my paper will be by theme. First, I will present a selection of poems which deal with the theme, or motif of colonialism. Next, I shall look at various poems as they relate to the second theme of culture change and indigenous responses to culture change. Lastly, I shall examine a selection of poems which deal with the theme of identity. The poems discussed here are arranged alphabetically by author in an appendix at the end of the paper.

One interesting observation in examining the poetry is that Palauans are more effective and forceful in asserting their views and perspectives concerning the issues of colonialism, culture change and identity. Palauans seem to be more sensitive to these issues, as well as the larger implications than other Micronesians, and there are specific reasons why this is the case, which shall be discussed in the final section of my paper.

Colonial history of Micronesia

In order to better understand why colonialism continues to surface as a major theme in Micronesian literature, it is important to briefly examine the colonial history of Micronesia. Micronesia has a long and complex colonial history which dates back over four centuries and is marked by the domination of four different colonial

powers: Spain, Germany, Japan, and the United States (Heine 1965:17).

Guam was the first Pacific Island to be colonized by the West. It was discovered in 1521 by the Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan (Gray 1974:29). But it was in 1668 that Guam was colonized by the Spanish with the arrival of Padre Diego Luis de San Vitores, whose first attempts of missionization met with resistance (Sanchez 1988:34).

The Spanish-American war of 1898 shattered any dreams of continuing expansion for the Spanish in the Pacific, for the Treaty of Paris was signed between the U.S. and Spain. This was an important turning point in the history of Guam, which directly impacted Guam and its people, for under the provisions of the Treaty, Spain was forced to cede Guam to the U.S. along with Puerto Rico (Ibid:75). The legacy of the Spanish over three centuries in Micronesia was religious in nature, for the primary focus of Spanish Catholicism was the Marianas.

Since the primary interests of the Germans in Micronesia were trade, and commercial interests, the Germans sought to control key island groups in order to protect the growing commercial empire. Thus in 1885, the Germans occupied the Marshalls where it sought to protect its commercial interests, like its other possessions in the Pacific. The Carolines were the next to be annexed, but the Spanish protested. In 1887, German traders established the Jaluit Company which monopolized commercial enterprises. In 1899,

the German received the western islands of Samoa as part of a tri-partite agreement with Britain and the U.S. By the first decade of the 20th century, the German Empire had rapidly expanded to include the Marshalls and Carolines, parts of New Guinea, the northern Solomons and Western Samoa (Hempenstall 16,18).

German expansion into the Pacific was quickly crushed with the outbreak of World War I, for in 1914 Japan seized control of the islands of Micronesia. The history of the Japanese administration in Micronesia is long and complex. Mark Peattie's Nan'yo: Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia 1885-1945 is a book which I would recommend which examines the nature of Japanese rule in Micronesia.

The Japanese instituted certain colonial policies throughout its rule. One of these policies was the incorporation of Micronesians into the larger Japanese empire. In addition, the Japanese utilized Micronesians as stepping stones in the southern expansion of Japanese power and profit (Peattie 1988:320). However, one criticism which I have is that Peattie downplays the strength and power of the Modekngei movement, which surfaced in Palau about a year after the Japanese took over (Ibid 78).

The onset of World War II was a watershed event in Pacific Islands history, which resulted in the dismantling of the Japanese empire. It also brought death, disease and destruction to Pacific Islanders who found themselves caught in the middle of a war which was not of their own making.

Geoffrey White and Lamont Lindstrom's book The Pacific theater: island representations of World War II is an excellent book which looks at the impact of WW II on Pacific Islanders.

By the end of 1945, America had acquired the islands of Micronesia, but there was uncertainty concerning which Department would administer the islands. In 1947, a unique political entity, a strategic trusteeship, was approved by the Security Council. In 1951, the administration of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (U.S.T.T.P.I) was delegated to the Department of the Interior (Kiste 1986:127).

American interests in Micronesia are strategic in nature, both now and in the past. The political status negotiations between Micronesia and the U.S. in 1969 made this more evident, as both sides were forced to clarify their positions (Gale 1979:203). As a result of the political status negotiations, the U.S.T.T.P.I. fragmented into four entities with its own separate political status. In 1975, the Northern Marianas voted for Commonwealth status. In 1977, the Marshalls and Palau began separate negotiations with the U.S. In 1986, the Republic of the Marshalls opted for the political status of free association with the U.S., as designated by the Compact of Free Association, a binding, complex legal document which dictates the nature of the relationship between the two. Free Association is a middle ground between integration and independence.

The entities of the FSM (Yap, Pohnpei, Truk, and Kosrae) followed suit. But the Republic of Belau remains a part of the T.T.P.I., for it has chosen to reject the Compact because the U.S. refuses to accept Belau's nuclear free constitution which explicitly opposes the use, testing, storage or disposal of all things nuclear. To date, the people of Belau have voted seven times on the Compact each time failing to reach the 75% vote necessary for ratification (Firth 1987:58-62).

Colonialism in a larger context

An important theme in the literature from the FSM and Palau is colonialism. Micronesia's long and complex colonial history set the stage for specific aspects of colonialism discussed in the poems. The poems themselves are reactionary pieces to the intrusive forces of colonial hegemony, and all that it brought with it, including manipulation, exploitation, segregation, change, and destruction. In addition, colonialism is a part of the lives and history of Micronesians. It seems to me that the subject of colonialism will continue to surface as a major theme in Micronesian literature, as long as indigenous writers grapple with the implications of colonialism. As Subramani (1985:6) indicates:

Colonialism will not be an easy subject to abandon:after all, the present generation of writers have found their vocation and subject matter in the colonial context. Colonialism also means the negation of the writer's individuality; his efforts to free himself of his colonised self is part of the general process of becoming a person. Paradoxically in this same process he also frees himself of his ancestral culture.

Poems dealing with colonialism

With this in mind, I will proceed to the actual poems themselves. One of the primary sources of a number of these poems is The Three Towers, a newspaper which was first published about 1956 in Truk. The paper contained school news, poems, legends, short stories, essays and religious writings. By the 1970's, it had expanded to include a considerable number of political essays in which students expressed their preference for independence. In fact, both the Xavier and Truk High School newspapers displayed an increasing array of political essays in the 1970's (Peacock, "Truk Independent Serials").

The Three Towers published a combination of best compositions done in English class, as well as the writings of students who voluntarily contributed their work. Xavier High School did not become coeducational until 1976, and published writings by women began appearing about 1980. The students at Xavier came from all over Micronesia, but Palauans seemed to show a special interest in and flair for poetry until about 1975 when their numbers diminished significantly. This drop in enrollment coincides with the political split of Palau from the rest of Micronesia (Hezel. Letter to the author. 7-6-91).

The poem "Micronesian Copra", taken from The Three Towers, was written by a Yapese male, Theo Thinnifel. He uses an interesting metaphor, namely that of processing copra which is the dried kernel of the coconut, to describe the

colonial experience of Micronesians under the different colonial powers. His choice of words, or diction in this poem is superb, for example, he uses words such as "husked" and "removed" to vividly describe the ways in which Micronesians were exploited and controlled by the Spanish, the Germans, the Japanese and the Americans.

It is through the poet's vivid use of descriptive adjectives that he makes his point, namely that in the process of the colonial encounter, Micronesians were reduced from people to mere products. The poem is short, yet powerful in meaning, and its last two lines depict Micronesians as passive bystanders, rather than active participants shaping their own future.

The Spanish came
 They sprouted us
 The Germans came
 They husked us
 The Japanese came
 They removed our shell
 Now, we are only soft meat
 The Americans will surely eat us.
 ("Theo Thinnifel, "Micronesian Copra")

In contrast to the last poem which depicts Micronesians as passive bystanders, the poem entitled "Milking the Native" published in The Trumpeter: The Voice of Palau High School, a school newspaper which contained school stories, essays, and poetry, is a powerful work by an anonymous person that speaks out strongly and assertively against colonialism. The poem itself, like the title, reflects the exploitation, deception, and betrayal on the part of the U.S. in their relations with Micronesia.

In essence, the poem is a very personal rendering of the colonial experience through the use of the grammatical first person "I." The poem brings to light the various ways in which Micronesians were exploited by outsiders. The foreigners came uninvited, told the people that they were savages, converted the people to a new religion, brought death and destruction, and created a legacy of dependency.

I NEVER INVITED YOU,
BUT YOU CAME TO MY ISLAND.
AND I WELCOMED YOU.

YOU TOLD ME
I WAS A SAVAGE
AND I BELIEVED YOU.

YOU TOLD ME I WAS DOOMED TO HELL,
AND I WAS SCARED.
YOU GAVE ME YOUR BIBLE,
AND I PRAYED.

YOU TOLD ME TO TILL MY ISLAND,
I PLANTED COCONUTS FOR YOUR PROFITS,
YOU TOLD ME TO DIG HOLES AND BUNKERS,
AND I DEFENDED YOU WITH MY LIFE AND
MY LAND...
("Milking the Native")

But unlike "Micronesian Copra", the final three lines of this poem are powerful fighting words, not of a passive individual, but of an individual grappling with the implications of colonialism, and attempting to free himself from his colonized self. The poem is effective as an indigenous response to colonial hegemony.

NOW YOU TELL ME
I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT
YOUR MONEY
YOUR THINGS
AND I BELIEVE YOU.

BUT I CAN ONLY GET THEM

IF I GIVE YOU MY ISLAND AND FREEDOM,
NEVER.

It is in the Micronesian Reporter that we find a number of poems which reflect on the colonial experience, the process of which from the perspective of these islanders was like being raked over the hot, flaming coals. The earliest issues were centered around the activities of the High Commissioner. During the 1950's, the Micronesian Reporter contained more feature stories than news items, because it took so long to receive stories from the outer islands.

Originally called the Micronesian Monthly, it changed its name from "Monthly" to "Reporter" in 1956. (Micronesian Reporter Index 1974:vi). The editorship of the Reporter changed hands from Cynthia Olson to P.F.Kluge in 1968, at which time it became a quarterly magazine. Dr. Kluge introduced a new format which included for the first time literature and news items. The magazine ran until 1980.

In the poem entitled "This Island", Kit Porter, an American woman who served as a Peace Corp volunteer on Rota in the 1960's, utilizes descriptive, vivid metaphors to bring to life the foreigners' violation of the land, people and culture of this particular island. Although the reader is unsure which specific island the poet is referring to, the experiences of the people can be placed within a larger colonial context.

First of all, like in Theo Thinnifel's "Milking the Native", Kit Porter utilizes the first person "I", which raises the poem to a more personal level. In addition, Porter

incorporates "she" and "her" into the poem because the violation of this island is likened to the violation of a woman. Throughout the poem, Porter uses "sexual metaphors" to get her point across. Her choice of words, "raped", "deflower" and "worn whore" are strong words which stresses being violated.

Porter uses the word "raped" in two different contexts in the poem. Being "raped by the wind" is less devastating than being "raped by man" for the island is able to "regain her past and to reproduce." In contrast, the last two stanzas depict the devastating effects of the rape by man, which in this case is likened to the rape by foreigners. The result is permanent scarring, for the virginity, innocence and purity of the island is lost, and in its place is a tainted "worn whore" of an island.

I know this island
I watch her raped by wind
Her fruit spread to rot
Washed by the sea's water

She will regain her past
Slightly altered
To produce again
Become herself again

I know this island
I watch her raped by man
Her mountains altered

Man will not allow her past
But will deflower
Till she is a worn whore
Her self lost and unwanted.
(Kit Porter, "This Island")

The poem entitled "Who?" was written by Anne Udui, a Palauan . It is an angry poem about the intrusiveness of

outsiders resulting in destroying the land, culture, and way of life of the people of this island which seems to be, from the context of the poem, to be one of the islands of Belau. Clearly, the attitude that Udui has is that outsiders had the audacity to come to the island, and control the lives of the people. Her choice of words is interesting, for she not only names the poem "Who", but each of the sentences of the poem begins with the words "Who are they..." which is to say: What gives these foreigners the right to intrude into our lives?

Who are they to come to our isle
 to change the machas to their "so-called"
 style?
 Who are they that unchained the latch
 of ways of living, like the abandoned taro
 patch?
 Who are they to give us the eye
 and call us strange if we sit in the abai?
 Who are they with greedy hands,
 to pollute our gardens and rock isle sands?
 Who are they, to scorn us with a snort,
 after all aren't we the ones who dream of a
 superport!
 (Anne Udui, "Who?")

Culture change

The topic of culture change and its impact on Pacific Islanders is an important one both in Pacific Islands history, as well as the contemporary Pacific. It is a favorite topic among various scholars as well. For example, David Hanlon's Ph.D. dissertation entitled Upon a Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Ponape from the Beginnings of Foreign Contact to 1890 is a fascinating and comprehensive account of how Ponapeans dealt with the intrusions of the

outside world to 1890, and how they used creativity and perserverance in adapting to change.

Just as the theme of culture change is reflected in scholarly works, it is also prevalent in the literature. One of the important themes in the poetry that I am discussing is how to cope with culture change. It seems to me that culture change is only a small part of what Micronesians and other Pacific Islanders are coming to terms with, namely change in a broad sense. Today, Pacific Islanders are grappling with the implications of the incorporation of their once autonomous systems into larger social, political and economic networks.

How does one deal with culture change? This is a very complex issue, for it is not simply a matter of cultural preservation versus Americanization and development. According to Jocelyn Linnekin (1990:152), who is the co-editor of the book Culture and Identity in the Pacific, tradition, which is a crucial element in a theory of culture change, is not something which is passively received. Rather, tradition is something which is dynamically created and manipulated by the present generation. In other words, the past is recreated in the present, just as it is linked to the present. In the following poems dealing with culture change, the reader can get a real sense of the struggles involved in attempting to reconcile the old and the new.

Poems dealing with culture change

Let us begin our examination of the theme of culture change with the poem "Mackerel and Rice:Mackerel and Rice" taken from The Carolines Observer, Yap's independent newspaper, first issued on December 17, 1976. Its publisher, Sam Falanruw, provided information happenings in the Yap District but it was volunteers who produced The Observer by utilizing Micronesian News Service releases as well as news gathered locally.

In addition, the paper contained an opinion page with editorials and a column written by Margie Falanruw called "Eco-Developments". Sam Falanruw resigned in 1977, and a few months later the paper ceased to continue. There has been no independent newspaper in Yap since the Carolines Observer (Peacock, "Yap Government Serials").

The unnamed poet of "Mackerel and Rice:Mackerel and Rice", addresses the issue of whether or not the increase of imported foods into Micronesia really benefits Micronesians. His viewpoint is that it hasn't served to benefit the people. Rather, the poem brings to light the fact that imported foods have only served to perpetuate the cycle of dependency whereby the ability to consume to emphasized, rather than the ability to produce. Indeed, increasing dependency on outsiders for their livelihood continues to be a critical issue in Micronesia, as well as the entire Pacific. The poet writes:

Feed them taro? Feed fresh fish?

What kind of craziness is this?
We feed imported food, you see
To increase your dependency.

Peanut butter and jelly is good
We wouldn't serve breadfruit if we could.
And a cup of Kool-Aid if you please,
To replace old fashioned coconut trees.

Theothora Fahorug, a Yapese female, wrote "A Poem:Losing the Old Ways" printed in CCM Jaws, which was a student newspaper on Ponape produced at the Community College of Micronesia its the journalism class. It was on Ponape that the Pacific Islands Central School was located. It was the only high school in Micronesia into the 1960's. The Micronesian teacher Education Program grew out of PICS, which expanded to include the Community College of Micronesia. The Community College of Micronesia later became the College of Micronesia (Peacock, "Ponape Serials").

The poem talks about losing the old ways, and to make her point Fahorug uses the analogy of a branch which was growing on a tree, and later broke off of the tree due to a strong wind. When the branch attempts to find its original place again, it is not able to, so it decides to remain at the foot of the tree instead. The branch is likened to an indigenous person who is living according to the old ways. Soon a wind comes along, which I have interpreted to mean change. The person begins to follow the new ways and seems content in doing so, but later becomes unhappy and finds conflict when he/she tries to either follow the new ways totally, or else attempt to reconcile the old and new. The end result is confusion, and a sense of not belonging.

A branch was growing on a tree
 very happily.
 A strong wind came
 and broke it off the tree.
 It travelled
 happily with the wind
 from place to place.

When the branch decided
 to go back to its place again,
 it found it hard to go back.
 When it tried
 to climb back,
 it fell down.
 When it tried to travel again,
 it couldn't
 because the wind
 was not strong enough.

The small branch stayed
 at the foot of the tree
 trying to find a way
 to get what it really needed
 in order to live
 happily again.
 (Theothora Fahorug, "A Poem:Losing the Old Ways")

Other poems as well deal with the issue of cultural change. One entitled "Ngak" by Palauan poet Val Sengebau is a first person narrative account of a young man caught between two worlds, namely his homeland and home away from home in a foreign land. Sengebau uses the example of the young man going through the conflict, and it is really effective, for the reader clearly gets a sense of the struggle of the man between the ways of the old and the ways of the new.

The poem is powerful and emotional for Sengebau seems to be more conscious of the larger issues at hand. He captures the reader with his choice of words, and the feeling and emotions that are so much a part of this poem. This poem, as

well as others written by him and Palauan poet Ramarui stands apart from the rest of the poetry written by Micronesians.

Clearly, through this poem we can see how historical processes, such as colonialism, Western education and Americanization shapes literature, as well as the real lives of the people writing such literature. Like many young people in Micronesia today, the person portrayed in the poem leaves his homeland to seek higher education abroad. Here is the portrait of an individual whose heart is with his people, culture and homeland, but who also desires the opportunities of higher education and other amenities abroad.

I took my leave from my beloved land
 Suffocated with deep emotional turbulence
 And not knowing where to land
 But my sight was over the horizon
 Seeking for intellectual solace
 Among strangers in the foreign land...
 I've become a man with split personality
 And the two identities have complexity
 That cannot find solace and amnesty.
 My heart yearns for its birthrights
 Where my umbilical cord is rooted deep in the soil
 Lulled by its cultural heritage...
 (Val Sengebau, "Ngak")

Another narrative poem, also by Val Sengebau is entitled "The Watcher." It relates the story of a young man called Ngak. One day, Ngak decides to leave his village to seek better opportunities abroad. But when he returns to his village, he finds that he is a stranger in his own homeland. The villagers noticed that he has changed, and has been influenced by the lifestyle and values of the outside world. All he thinks about now are girls in mini skirts, cars, and

foreign foods. Ngak, who longs to be a part of the outside world away from his village, decides to leave.

When Ngak left for school
 Way beyond the horizon
 Everyone cried
 Including his dog, Bilis
 His pig, Babii
 And his rooster, Malk...
 Then one typical day
 Ngak arrived
 Thin, tall and grown up.
 And to everyone's dismay
 He sported long hair
 Like the island's girls,
 And wearing darkies
 As if repelled
 By the sight of his homeland...
 When the next full moon tide
 Flooded the shore
 Ngak packed his strange luxuries
 And left.
 No one saw him off
 Nor cried.
 (Val Sengebau, "The Watcher")

This poem clearly reflects a phenomenon going on not only in Micronesia, but throughout the Pacific, namely the exodus of Pacific Islanders from their home villages to urban centers to seek higher education, wage labor, and other urban amenities. Ngak represents one individual who is going through this transition.

Like "Ngak" and "The Wanderer", the poem "The Unfinished" by Palauan poet Hermana Ramarui reflects on the conflict of Micronesians attempting to reconcile the old ways and the new ways. The poem itself reflects confusion, ambiguity, and disillusionment on the part of the poet. The real question that she seems to be asking is: Why introduce us to your world in the first place?

Ramarui is speaking out against the indignities which foreigners imposed on indigenous people. She is saying that outsiders introduced new ways and new material goods, but somehow they were insufficient to meet the needs of the indigenous people, for outsiders failed to take into account the changing needs and desires of the indigenous people, once they were introduced to the outside world.

You introduced to us
The world you know.
Why not with proper plan?
Why not with assurance?

You show us things,
Things we like and
Things we could use,
But not with assurance.

If you've no plans to prepare for
Needs and wants that come after,
Why expose us to your world
In the first place?
(Hermana Ramarui, "The Unfinished")

The poem captures the dilemma that Pacific Islanders as a whole find themselves in. They desire to somehow retain some aspects of the old ways, yet they yearn for the new ways, but don't know how to incorporate the new ways into their lives. According to the poem, the result is "mixed-up tunes" or a failure of the old and new to meld. Paul Defan, a Yapese male, wrote an interesting, yet powerful poem which was published in The Three Towers, the title of which is "We Were...We Are...We Will" Defan's poem has a definite structure and form which he utilizes to make his point concerning the transformation of how things were in the past, compared to the present and future.

Each stanza contains five lines. The first five lines of the poem begins with "We were" and relate to the past. The next five lines begins with "We are" and relate to the present. The last five lines begins with "We will" and refer to the future. The main thrust of the poem is that colonialism and the intrusiveness of outsiders have served to break down Micronesian societies and to erode Micronesian values and customs.

We were born to rule our own lands,
 We were to make great use of our own lands freely,
 We were to help each other and our tiny islands,
 We were free to make our own decisions,
 We were strongly united....

We are born to let others rule our lands with us,
 We are to permit others to make use of our lands
 for us,
 We are to hurt each other and our community,
 We are hardly free to make a decision in our life,
 We are dividing ourselves without care....

We will be born to rule money,
 We will always make use of our land for ourselves,
 We will be victims of our own selfishness,
 We will have no right to make any decisions of our
 own,
 We will be great enemies....
 (Paul Defan, "We Were...We Are...We Will")

The first lines of each of the stanzas talks about how islanders lost control over their own lands. The second lines of each of the stanzas depicts the transformation of the control of the lands from the indigenous people to outsiders. The rest of the poem is structured in much the same way in which Defan talks about how intrusive outside forces have eroded Micronesian values, such that individualism is stressed over and above communalism.

In essence, Defan is saying that outsiders manipulated the situation for their own purposes, using land as a power base. Ultimately, Defan says that the power to make one's own decisions, and to therefore be in control of one's own destiny, was stripped of Micronesians by outsiders.

Aritae Reynolds, who is Trukese, wrote a poem entitled "Where Do I Go" taken from Mirror of Life, which was published in 1979, and contained two volumes of literature written by Truk High School students. The poem addresses the same issue of culture change, and the feeling of not belonging. In addition, the theme is not only the same as that of the previous poem, but the structure of this poem is similar to the last one. This time, the poet focuses on a fundamental structure in Micronesian societies, namely the house, to depict the transformation of culture change.

A big house it seemed.
 Here I stayed.
 Here I slept.
 Here I ate and played.
 But times must change
 And so have we.
 From small to big
 I have become.
 From big to small
 The house remains the same
 No more.

A big village it seemed.
 Here I shared.
 Here I worked.
 Here I loved and cared.
 But times must change
 And so have we.
 From small to big
 I have become.
 From big to small
 The village can provide
 No more.

A big island it seemed,
 Where I used to stay,
 Where I used to sleep,
 Where I used to eat and play.
 But times must change
 And so have we.
 I've left my home and village,
 I've left my island too.
 I'm still adrift and lost.
 I'm looking for A BIGGER PLACE.
 Where do I go from now???

(Aritae Reynold, "Where Do I Go")

Apparently, the house where the person in the poem was raised and slept in no longer serves the same function or importance in a changing society. The key lines in the whole poem, which occurs in all three stanzas are as follows: "But times must change/And so have we" (Reynold 1979:191). What has happened is that the person in this poem has outgrown the confines of the house. Next, like the house, the village soon ceases to meet the needs of a person who yearns to eat, sleep, and play elsewhere.

Soon, the entire island ceases to provide the needs of the individual. What has happened? The person portrayed in the poem, like so many other Micronesians in real life, outgrow first their houses, then their villages, and finally their islands. These people become unsatisfied and disillusioned for they desire better opportunities abroad, so they eventually decide to leave their homeland. One wonders whether or not this particular poem is a reflection of self, as Reynold uses the first person "I" throughout the poem.

Pres Sablan, a male from the Northern Marianas, wrote a poem entitled "Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow" also taken from

Mirror of Life. Like Defan's poem, this poem talks about coping with the different realities of yesterday, today, and tomorrow in a straight-forward manner. Sablan writes that yesterday he lived in a soft, brown world, where things were familiar to him. Today, or the present is associated with living in a tough white world, and tomorrow, which is represented as the future, is linked with the realities and uncertainties of the strange New World, what ever that may be.

Yesterday
 I lived in a soft, brown world,
 I ate from the earth,
 The food tasted familiar
 But not as sweet.

Today
 I live
 In a tough, white world,
 Someone feeds me,
 The food tastes unfamiliar
 But sweet.

Tomorrow
 May be
 A very strange
 New World???

Yesterday
 And today
 Are different.
 So will be
 Tomorrow.
 Yesterday I crawled.
 Today I walk
 And even run.
 Tomorrow
 I will probably
 Fly.
 (Pres Sablan, "Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow")

Again, the theme of this poem is learning to deal with the harsh realities and uncertainties of the tough white

world, upon leaving the confines of the soft, brown world. Like the other poets, the reader gets a real sense of the struggle that Sablan is experiencing. By relating the poem through the first person "I", the poem becomes more personal and real. Like other Micronesians, Sablan is disillusioned, and is searching for a sense of belonging.

But what this poem lacks, like some of the other poems which were not written by Palauans, is a real sense of questioning the very essence of culture change and change in a broad sense. Palauan poet, Hermana Ramarui's poem on culture change entitled "The Unfinished" stands out for she questions and challenges outsiders who introduced indigenous people to new ways and material goods, but left the indigenous people dangling when outsiders failed to take into consideration the changing needs of the indigenous people. It is in this way that Ramarui goes one step further in not only making the dilemma be known, but looking for answers by examining the root of the problem, namely the interaction between the outsider and indigenous person in the cross-cultural encounter.

Lastly, we shall examine the final poem which deals with the issue of culture change and foreign influence. Not surprisingly, it is called "Dissatisfied" by Elvis Shirai, a Trukese male. The main focus of the poem is the building and decorating of a Trukese house. What the man in the poem sets out to do is to decorate the Trukese house with Trukese

decorations. However, he ends up doing something quite to the contrary.

To build a Trukese house,
And finish it with Trukese decoration,
That's what he wanted
For it.

To know what goes inside the house,
And make good use of it,
That's what he wanted
From it.

To come back home
And beautify it with different things,
That's what he does
To it....
(Elvis Shirai, "Dissatisfied")

What prevails in the end is that the man in the poem chooses the new modern ways of decorating the Trukese house, rather than the Micronesian way of decorating the house. The end result is that the Trukese house becomes more of an American house more than anything else, for the Trukese house ceases to retain the same importance in Trukese society. Again, the poem depicts how new values, concepts, and ways of doing things have supplanted old values, concepts and ways of doing things.

To desire the new and lose the old,
And to remain unsatisfied,
That's what it does
To him.

Identity

The issue of identity in the Pacific is a complex and multi-faceted one. The book Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific, edited by Jocelyn Linnekin and Lin Poyer, examines the nature of ethnicity and differing indigenous

perceptions of cultural distinctiveness. Pacific Islanders make definite distinctions of identity between themselves and others based on their own concepts, rather than Western concepts.

Linnekin and Poyer (1990:13) point out that one of the impacts of colonialism was the redefinition of identity in the Pacific. Colonialism introduced foreign models of identity, as well as new political and economic structures.

Moreover, the concept of ethnicity became entrenched in a host of laws and administrative policies that still operate throughout the colonial and postcolonial Pacific. The nature and uses of cultural differentiation were substantially altered in this context. Confronted with political systems organized along Western lines, modern Pacific Islanders are pressured to formulate their group identity in Western terms.

The imposition of foreign imposed definitions of identity has created confusion for Pacific Islanders who are searching for who they really are. It is this sense of searching and grappling for self which is evident in the following selection of poems dealing with identity. Indeed, because identity is so much an integral part of the colonial experience for many Pacific Islanders, it is not surprising that the theme of identity is so much a part of the indigenous literature.

The imposition of foreign social models makes cultural identity problematic both in thought and in action. "Who I am" now determines what I can and cannot do, can and cannot have, can and cannot be. Ethnicity (as defined by the metropolitan power) may conflict with the contingent and situational character of indigenous cultural identity, but it becomes nonetheless a limitation on personal action and a challenge to local theories of consocial

personhood. Social relationships and biography no longer determine personal identity; an arbitrary and externally imposed categorization comes increasingly to shape a person's life. (Linnekin and Poyer 1990:13)

This is not to say that all Pacific Islanders are passive participants in molding their cultural identities, for throughout the Pacific, one finds Pacific Islanders utilizing identity as a springboard toward achieving certain political goals, for example, Maoris of New Zealand, Hawaiians, and Kanaks of New Caledonia. Increasingly, we see the formation of ethnic political movements in the Pacific, bringing together disenfranchised peoples of color in order to contest colonial domination, and to achieve such goals as political sovereignty, or social equality (Linnekin and Poyer 1990:13-14). As Linnekin and Poyer have noted:

Whether called ethnicity, nationality, or even "race," cultural identity is a potent basis for political mobilization among peoples disenfranchised under colonial rule. (Linnekin and Poyer 1990:150)

I would argue that among Micronesians, it seems to be Palauans who possess a stronger sense of who they are, and are more forceful and assertive in making their identity be known through poetry. The Palauan poet who exemplifies this best is Hermana Ramarui. Her poems on identity stand out from the rest of the poems on identity, for in them she voices the flexible, integrative, dynamic aspects of the Palauan identity. Indeed, Ramarui sees these qualities of the Palauan identity as a springboard for coping with new realities, as well as achieving political goals.

Poems of Identity

The poem entitled "Being a Palauan" by Hermana Ramarui embodies a woman searching for her identity in order to face harsh new realities. First of all, I found the poem to be fascinating. Throughout the poem, Ramarui asserts that being a Palauan is not a thing; it is a state of being which is flexible, malleable, self-sufficient and dynamic. It does not dwell in the past, but lives and survives in the present, in order to explore the future. Ramarui points out that part of being a Palauan is not to be afraid of new learning, but to integrate the best of the old and new ways of learning.

It is in this way that the Palauan identity is flexible, integrative, and multi-faceted. According to Ramarui, part of being a Palauan is to be free to retain and to discard as one desires, in order to face new realities.

Palauan, not a thing,
 But a state of being,
 Is capability
 And is freedom.
 It is a being
 Equipped to act
 And to react.
 A center in itself
 It hangs onto nothing.
 It takes freely
 As it sees fit.
 It discard freely
 When no longer needs.
 It is freedom
 It is ability
 To use and discard
 Act and face
 New Realities.
 (Hermana Ramarui, "Being a Palauan")

In another of Ramarui's poem called "Palauan Culture," Ramarui again says that like Palauan identity, Palauan

culture is not a thing, but a state of being which functions in the present. She says that when the past is duplicated, it falls short in meeting the needs of the Palauan people who are living in the present.

Culture!
 Maintain it, they say.
 I say, please tell me.
 What is Palauan culture?
 Palauan culture is
 A state of being.
 It is people
 Living and growing.
 Palauan culture
 Is alive.
 It is now, not
 Yesterday nor before.
 Palauan culture
 Of yesterday is death,
 Because it runs short
 Of the needs of today,
 Of Palauan people
 Who live today.
 These people are culture.
 Treat the past
 As it suppose to be
 Our folly is that
 We try to recreate
 By trying to duplicate
 The impractical past
 Whose songs are
 Out of tune.
 (Hermana Ramarui, "Palauan Culture")

According to Jocelyn Linnekin (1990:169), identities emerge and change in the light of new social and political developments.

Moreover, the processes by which these various levels of identity are constructed-the externalization of culture, the use of tradition as a political symbol, the conscious formulation of cultural models-are very much the same, and are indicative of the inherent dynamism and flexibility of cultural identity.

We move now from Ramarui's poems to a poem written by Koachy Samuel, a Trukese male. The poem, entitled "Which Is Which" appeared in Echoes of the Trukese Culture, a magazine which ran from 1977-1978. It was prepared for the Ethnic Heritage Class by Truk High School students and staff. The magazine contained poetry, photography, legends, stories, and invaluable interviews with older Trukese (Peacock, "Truk Government Serials").

This confusing poem differs from Ramarui's poems in that it is a portrait of a confused person caught in the midst of an identity crisis. It seems that in addition to searching for his identity, Samuel is also searching for overall meaning and purpose in life. ↩

(In the poem, Samuel refers to two angels, or advisors, who dictated to him who he was, and where he belonged. It is unclear from the poem who these two advisors really were, for Samuel is sketchy and abstract about this.

However, from the context, we can surmise that the first advisor is telling Samuel to maintain his identity as a Micronesian, thus keeping his Micronesian values and customs. The second advisor seems to represent the outsider offering Westernised concepts of identity and values. The result is confusion and ambivalence for Samuel, who is searching for what is truly right for him.

Who am I
Where am I?
I can't seem to find the answers.

I don't know where I belong.
 I don't know where to go.
 I remember just one time,
 The time I had two angels.
 Both were good advisors
 And told me who I was
 And where I belonged.
 The first advisor helped me.
 He told me many things.
 He told me to follow him.
 He told me what was good
 Which was truly good for me.
 The second advisor helped me too.
 He told me many things.
 He told me to follow him.
 He told me what was good
 Which was truly bad for me.
 I don't know which advisor to follow.
 I think I'm lost.
 I don't know where to go.
 My trouble leads me
 To only one place--hell!
 (Koachy Samuel, "Which Is Which")

Perhaps the poem "Who Will Listen To Me" best reflects the turmoil, confusion, and anguish of a person searching for identity, love, and acceptance from his family. The poem, which was written by Toyo Mori, a young Trukese man, was published in Mirror of Life. The poem is disturbing because it was written by a suicidal person who was rejected by his family.

Throughout Micronesia, especially in Truk, there are extremely high rates of suicide, primarily among young men between the ages of 15-30. Evidence suggests that the rate of suicide in Truk, as well as in other parts of Micronesia, has an epidemic quality to it, and as such has plateaued after reaching its zenith in the early 1980's (Hezel 1987:194-95).

Hezel (Ibid:205) says that a common factor in virtually all of the suicides in Truk is a perceived threat to a

central family relationship, be it mother, father, brother, or uncle. In this particular poem, the writer feels as if his parents have rejected him, and no longer love him.

Has modernization been a major contributing factor in the high rates of suicide on Truk? Hezel (Ibid:205) acknowledges that there may be a link, for in the past twenty years, there have been extensive changes in Micronesia which would have served to create friction between the young man and his parents. In addition, he says that modernization may have weakened the social identity of young people.

For example, certain changes in value have increased the expectations between youth and their parents, and vice versa. Differences in values between the young and the old exacerbates the tensions, and any attempt made to resolve these conflicts (Ibid:122).

...recent cultural change has made family relationships more problematic in the following ways. Value shifts, as they have changed perceptions, have made communication within the family more difficult and open to misunderstanding. At the same time, altered family structures have made this communication more frequent. Meanwhile, because of role changes, the young man's importance in and to the family has become more problematic. (Hezel 1985:123).

Palauan poetry

When Palauan poetry is compared with poetry from the FSM, it is clear that there are some major differences. Palauan poets are definitely more forceful and outspoken in asserting their anti-colonial stance than other Micronesians. In order to understand why this is so, it is important to

examine the history of Palau, more specifically Modekngei, and how it relates to Palauan literature. Modekngei was an anti-Japanese, anti-government movement in Palau which began in 1918 (Peattie 1988:78).

Like many Melanesian resistance movements, such as Maasina Rule, Modekngei grew out of opposition against foreign control and domination, and collectively addressed the grievances of the people against the colonial authority. The movement was syncretic in that it combined indigenous beliefs and practices and Christian beliefs and practices (Ibid).

It seems to me that Palauan poetry is much stronger as a form of indigenous resistance against colonialism partly because of the Modekngei movement, which still is a part of the history and culture of the Palauan people, and served to foster Palauan pride and identity. In addition, Palauan poetry takes into account historical and political factors much more than the poetry from the FSM, and this is especially evident in the works by Hermana Ramarui.

What do Palauan poets have to say about colonialism? Valentine Sengebau, a Palauan male, contributed essays and poetry regularly to the Micronesian Reporter, and was a staff member as well. He wrote an epic poem entitled "Rairecharmoracherchar", the meaning of which is unclear. His poems are a reflection of the larger cosmos, and are intertwined with history and society. According to Sengebau:

My poems are perceptions and reflections of the cosmos, universe, the world and of people, places, things in fragments and in sum, within fantasy and reality of dreams and nightmares, of hope and despair, of love and hate, of birth, life and death. (Sengebau 1976:38)

The poem relates the fascinating epic legend of the settlement of the islands of Micronesia by the original inhabitants, combining history and myth-making. The poem reads like a story in which the rich history of this place, referred to in the poem as "Beluman", or our homeland, is depicted. According to the poem, the indigenous people settled "Beluman" not by accidental drift but by purposeful skilled voyages. We learn from the poem that the indigenous people were skilled, courageous navigators who braved the elements in order to reach their destination.

The indigenous people settled on the land of the thousand isles and lived off of the land and the sea. They voyaged to other islands and soon there evolved through intermarriage a blend of peoples, cultures and languages. Then the foreigners came.

They plundered and raped
The inhabitants, land and sea.
And further claimed the thousand isles.
In the name of their god and kings.
There were inquisitors to save the heathens
And Kaiser's boys lusting for minerals and copra
And children of the rising sun to colonize.
(Val Sengebau, "Rairecharmoracherchar")

The intruders came in the name of gold, God and glory. They conquered the land, and attempted to convert the heathen savages. In this poem, Sengebau likens the colonial experience to being eaten and devoured by wolves. In this

particular instance, the indigenous people are the sheep being devoured by wolves.

And each scar was deeper than the last
 Until the entire populace
 Of the thousand isles in the sun
 Became the nation of sheep
 Without the shepherds of old.
 Then a pack of wolves descends
 Among the herd and devours a good meal.
 Slowly and silently the prey and predator
 Become one through digestion.

We move now from one Palauan poet to the next, namely to a Palauan woman named Hermana Ramarui of whom there is very little background information available. Ramarui's poetry is indicative of the strong anti-colonial attitude in Palau, which is linked to the Modekngei movement. Ramarui's poetry is forceful in tone and strongly anti-colonial, yet woven into her poetry are metaphors which further distinguishes the poetry as distinctly Palauan. Intricately woven into her poetry are themes of colonialism, history, politics, and the making of Palau's future. But unlike the poetry from the FSM, and even from Sengebau, Ramarui's poetry delves much more into the political considerations, which are so much a part of the literature. Indeed, Ramarui definitely sees herself as an active participant in shaping Palau's future.

The poem entitled "Call of Youth" by Ramarui exemplifies literature evolving from a stage of reaction and confrontation against colonialism toward adjustment and synthesis. In the first few lines of the poem, Ramarui invokes the help of the elders and the ancestors in severing the ties of the colonial web; indeed a very Palauan thing to

do. She does this by utilizing symbolism which is associated with giving birth. In essence, she is encouraging her dear elders to cut the umbilical cord, which is the link to the foreign womb, thus leaving the birth canal open to Palauans to do what they may.

Give us birth, my elders.
 Stop the colonial web.
 Open the door to freedom
 Cut that binding string.
 (Hermana Ramarui, "Calls of Youth")

The second part of the poem "Let me live as my ancestors did..." is a call to Palauans to begin to shape their own destinies in their quest for self-government. Ramarui is urging Palauans to collectively bind together in unity, and through self-awareness in order to achieve their freedom, much like the leaders of the Modekngei brought the people together in order to contest the Japanese colonial order.

Next, Ramarui goes from challenging colonialism to a stage in which she attempts to come to terms with the changed reality brought about by such historical processes as colonialism. Her solution is that Palauans cannot move forward until they sever all ties with America and bind together in unity. It is in this way that this particular poem moves from passive cultural resistance to active political resistance.

Stars of national awareness
 Are now shining on our door steps.
 Submit to the call of our national stars.
 Give us freedom our wise ones.
 Let our nation be born.

"The Awakening", also by Ramarui is another powerful anti-colonial, politically charged poem. The title itself suggests a new rebirth or realization that Palau belongs to Palauans, not foreigners, and that Palauans have the right to exercise self-determination.

Save Palau for Palauans
 Save Palau from foreigners
 And keep Palau in the hands
 Of those who love it dearly...
 (Hermana Ramarui, "The Awakening")

Clearly, Ramarui supports Palau's separation from the rest of Micronesia, for throughout the poem she speaks out against the artificial tie called Unity of Micronesia, which she feels denies the awareness and the fundamental rights of Palauan people.

Ramarui's poem entitled "Freedom" is a strong, lengthy reactionary poem which depicts the "hooking" of Micronesia by America. Ramarui uses the term "hooking" in the context of Micronesians being caught by Americans against their own free will, much like how a fish is caught by a fisherman. Throughout the poem, Ramarui likens the relationship of the colonized to the colonizer to a fishing expedition.

Micronesia
 Is hooked
 For preying upon
 A tiny bait
 On a silver hook
 Cause it was greedy
 And it was blind
 And it was weak
 To do anything
 But yield and bow
 And kiss the hands
 Of those
 Who saw it

Uncivilized.
(Hermana Ramarui, "Freedom")

Ramarui is definitely making a statement, namely that Micronesians will no longer accept being called uncivilized savages by foreigners. The issue that the poet is really addressing is that of "psychological brainwashing", an intricate part of the colonial experience for indigenous peoples. "Psychological brainwashing" is the process in which islanders are brainwashed into believing that they are somehow inferior. If a person is repeatedly told this over and over again, he/she begins to believe it.

Interestingly enough, the term Micronesian is used throughout the poem, for Ramarui chooses to group Palauans with other Micronesians, unlike her other poems. The reason for this is that she is making the point that it was all Micronesians, not just Palauans, who were exploited by America and other colonial powers.

Later on in the poem, the reader finds that Ramarui is grappling with the changed reality brought about by colonialism. In her own mind, Ramarui is attempting to reach a compromise and come to terms with the harsh reality.

America, the great
Do compromise with me
Since I cannot become you
Not can you become a fish.
Throw your golden hooks away.
You don't really need them
To catch a little thing like me.
So America
The beautiful
The powerful
The great and
The ugly,
Let us come to terms

With each other.
 We're travelling
 To the future together
 And we've travelled thru a
 Peaceful and troubled sea.
 We didn't get
 Into it together.
 You imposed yourself
 I was violated.

According to Ramarui, Micronesians are tired of being told how to live their lives by outsiders. Ramarui writes:

Let me live in living sea
 And not in the aquarium.
 Don't be just a spectator
 But come swim with me
 Don't attempt to teach me
 How to swim in the water
 I've lived for years.
 Simply come if you wish
 As a guest not a conqueror
 And share your bread with me.

Palauan assertiveness and resistance in a larger context

One interesting point which was made throughout this paper was that Palauans are more vocal and outspoken, as well as more sensitive to issues such as culture change, identity, and colonialism than other Micronesians, and this is evident in the poetry which I have discussed. It seems to me that there are definite reasons why this is the case, one of which is the essence of the Palauan character. P.F. Kluge, who served in the Peace Corps, is the author of the book The Edge of Paradise: America In Micronesia, which sheds light on the Palauan character. According to Kluge (1991:20), Palauans have a reputatation for being competitive, pushy, cocky, arrogant, opportunistic, outspoken, hustling and entrepreneurial.

Indeed, I would argue that it is precisely these Palauan characteristics which allowed them not only to survive the ravages of change in a broad sense, but to use it to their advantage. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Palauans have been inundated by culture change through three separate institutions, namely the church, the school, and elected government.

How did Palauans react to these changes? They met the challenge by using foreign institutions to their advantage, cleverly manipulating along the way in order to suit their purposes. During the Japanese colonial period in Micronesia, Palauans were suppressed and subject to racial discrimination through the educational system. But, during the American period Palauans found an opportunity to take advantage of their newfound knowledge and education. The school has served as a springboard for Palauans to make their points of view be heard with conviction and tenacity.

During the American period, Palauans have learned to confront, to speak out, to debate, and to challenge the stranger on his own cultural turf. This has been fundamental in overcoming a deep sense of inferiority implanted during the Japanese period. (Shuster 1982:233)

In addition, the introduction of elected government revolutionized politics in Palau. Previously, it was the chiefs through heredity who claimed the power, but with the introduction of elected politicians, this all changed. Today it is the political leaders of Palau who are educated. Also, there are certain elements in Palau's social structure which

tends to encourage controversy and competition. For example, politics, which is an integral part of Palauan society, encourages controversy, debate and dialogue (Shuster 1982:346.47,364).

According to Shuster (1982:379), what we have in Palau are dual forces of cooperation, unity, and community at work, balanced against forces of competition, accumulation, and manipulation, which fuels social change. It is the combination of these dual forces which allows Palauans to push forward with their goals, and to be active participants in shaping their own destinies, while still retaining social cohesion and a strong Palauan identity.

What is fascinating about the Palauan micro-world is that we can see close up the passions, plans, follies and greatness that fuel social change and, in the process, provide grist for the historians' mill. The Palauan penchant for competition-accumulation-manipulation balanced against cooperation-unity-community has been the harder of the two cultural millstones in grinding out events in the arena of elected government. (Shuster 1982:374-75)

Palauan poetry, which stands out compared to other poetry written by Micronesians from the FSM, is really a part of the total Palauan socio-cultural system which is flexible, dynamic and resilient, much like the Palauan identity which Ramarui talked about. It is precisely this type of system which allows Palauans to continue to speak out with conviction and assertiveness.

That the sociocultural consequences of eager acceptance of the school and elected government as educators lead to social fragmentation on the one hand, while reluctant acceptance of the church as

educator leads to social cohesion on the other, indicate that the Palauan socio-cultural system is incredibly resilient and adaptable to the carrying of cultural "excess baggage." After ninety years of external cultural influence, Palauans have learned foreign ways and in the process changed these ways and themselves. The tension of given and constructed, of structure and person have been played out on the stage of Palauan cultural values and categories. This has taken place through the acceptance and re-molding, however incomplete, of Christianity, American-type schooling and elected government. Palauans seek to be "modern" and modernism is identified as a pragmatic acceptance and refashioning of foreign islands of meaning in personally and culturally satisfying ways. (Shuster 1982:402)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the field of Micronesian literature is a fascinating, yet relatively unexplored field of study. But it is certainly worthy of study, for much can be learned and understood just by examining the literary works from Micronesia. Literature is intertwined with history and the social structure.

It is by reading literature written by Micronesians that one can better understand such issues as colonialism, identity, and culture change from the perspectives of Micronesians. After all, poetry is a form of creative, dynamic expression, emotion, and spirit. Among Micronesians, it seems to be Palauans who are more effective and forceful in asserting their viewpoints.

But, there is room for much more research to be conducted in the area of Micronesian literature. It is my desire that this paper serve as a springboard for further research. For example, it would be interesting to find out

whether or not there are common themes in poetry from Micronesian, and the rest of the Pacific? Also, no one has delved into the actual short stories, legends, and plays from Micronesia. Indeed, there is room for more contributions into this interesting topic.

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Appendix

Selection of poems from the FSM and Palau

MILKING THE NATIVE

I NEVER INVITED YOU,
BUT YOU CAME TO MY ISLAND.
AND I WELCOMED YOU.

YOU TOLD ME
I WAS A SAVAGE
AND I BELIEVED YOU.

YOU TOLD ME I WAS DOOMED TO HELL,
AND I WAS SCARED.
YOU GAVE ME YOUR BIBLE,
AND I PRAYED.

YOU TOLD ME TO TILL MY ISLAND,
I PLANTED COCONUTS FOR YOUR PROFITS,
YOU TOLD ME TO DIG HOLES AND BUNKERS,
AND I DEFENDED YOU WITH MY LIFE AND
MY LAND.

BUT YOU BOMBED MY HOUSE AND MY LAND,
AND I RAN INTO THE WOODS.

YOU TOLD ME YOU FREED ME FROM WAR,
AND I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL,
TO YOU AS MY LIBERATOR.

YOU ESTABLISHED YOUR GOVERNMENT
ON MY ISLAND,
WITHOUT MY PERMISSION.

YOU SENT ME TO YOUR SCHOOL,
AND I LEARNED YOUR WAY,
AND I WORKED FOR YOU AS AN OFFICE BOY.
YOU GAVE ME YOUR DOLLARS,
AND I BOUGHT YOUR THINGS.

NOW YOU TELL ME
I CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT
YOUR MONEY
YOUR THINGS
AND I BELIEVE YOU.

BUT I CAN ONLY GET THEM
IF I GIVE YOU MY ISLAND AND FREEDOM,
NEVER.

Anonymous. 1977. The Carolines Observer. Volume 1, No.10. Colonia, Yap

MACKEREL AND RICE
MACKEREL AND RICE

Mackerel and rice, mackerel and rice
Cook it up sticky and nice.
And you get it all for free,
The wonderful school lunch recipe.

Vitamin A! Vitamin B!
You don't think they matter to me? -
The only vitamin we trust
is the U.S. saying, "You belong to us!"

Feed them taro? Feed fresh fish?
What kind of craziness is this?
We feed imported food, you see
To increase your dependency.

Peanut butter and jelly is good
We wouldn't serve breadfruit if we could,
And a cup of-Kool-Aid if you please,
To replace old fashioned coconut trees.

The fishing ships catch the tuna,
Freeze it, send it out and soon
Cans of Starkist tuna are sold
To Micronesians, brave and bold.

And when you've forgotten how to fish
And eating corned beef is your only wish,
The children will come from far and wide
To eat U.S. food, side by side.

1976. The Three Towers. April 25. Moen, Truk. Xavier High School

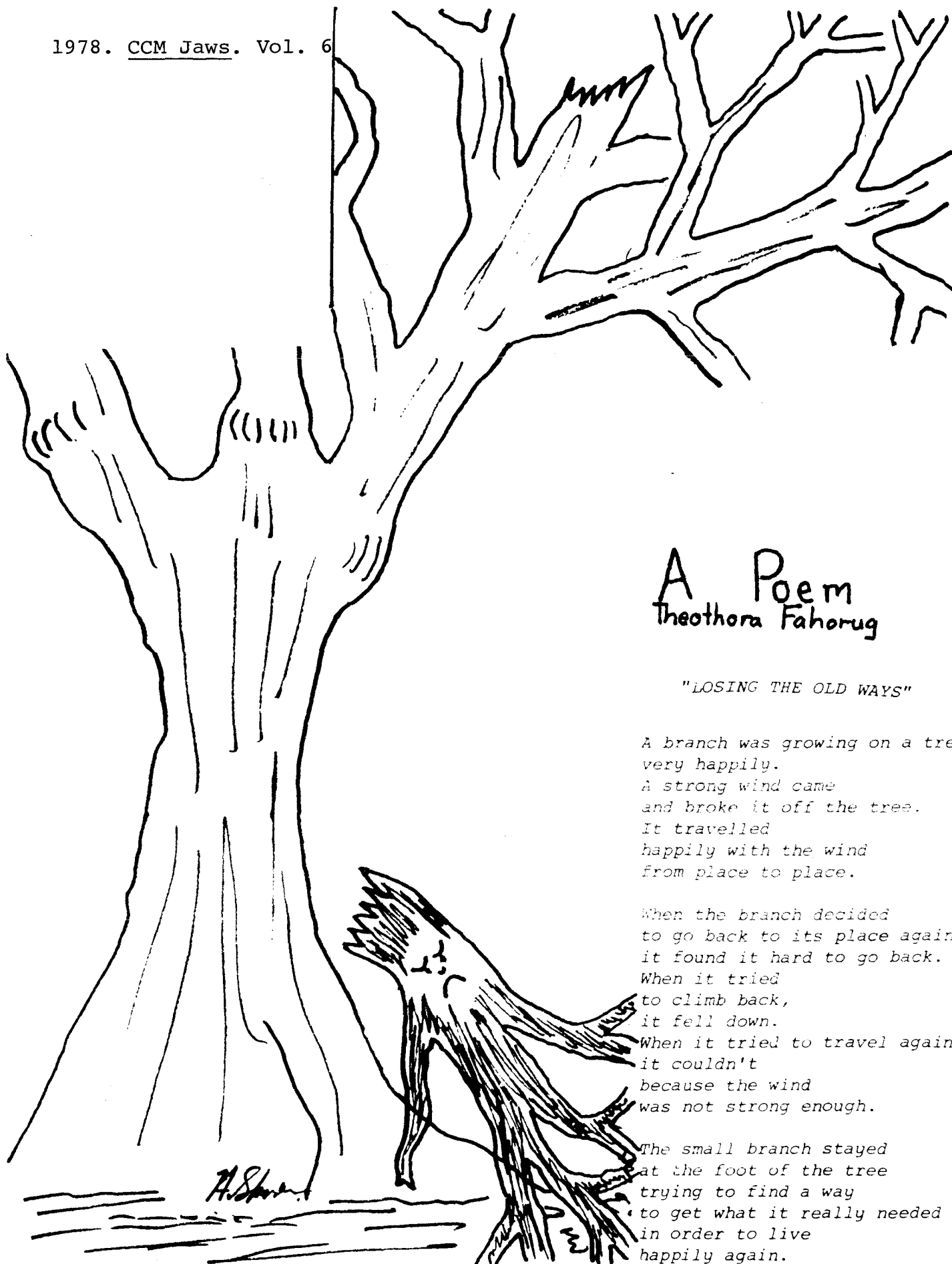
"WE WERE...WE ARE...WE WILL

by Paul Defan

We were born to rule our own lands,
 We were to make great use of our own lands freely,
 We were to help each other and our tiny islands,
 We were free to make our own decisions,
 We were strongly united....

We are born to let others rule our lands with us,
 We are to permit others to make use of our own lands for us,
 We are to hurt each other and our community,
 We are hardly free to make a decision in our life,
 We are dividing ourselves without care.....

We will be born to rule money,
 We will always make use of our land for outsiders,
 We will be victims of our own selfishness,
 We will have no right to make any decisions of our own,
 We will be great enemies....

1978. CCM Jaws. Vol. 6

A Poem Theothora Fahorug

"LOSING THE OLD WAYS"

A branch was growing on a tree
very happily.
A strong wind came
and broke it off the tree.
It travelled
happily with the wind
from place to place.

When the branch decided
to go back to its place again,
it found it hard to go back.
When it tried
to climb back,
it fell down.
When it tried to travel again,
it couldn't
because the wind
was not strong enough.

The small branch stayed
at the foot of the tree
trying to find a way
to get what it really needed
in order to live
happily again.

1979. Mirror of Life. Volume 2. Moen, Truk. Truk Education Department

WHO WILL LISTEN TO ME?

"Mama, where are you?
Papa, are you around?"

They are mine,
But am I theirs?
I'm confused.

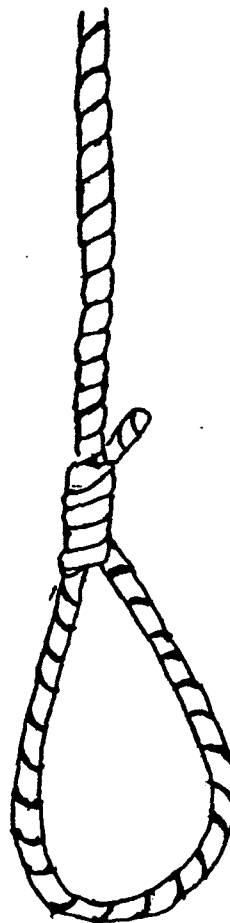
When I cried, I cried alone,
No father listening to my pain,
No mother wiping my tears,
No brother's hand comforting me.

When I worked, I worked alone,
My brothers playing and eating,
My sisters eating and playing,
My parents' hearts loving them,
Not me.

Somebody, listen to me!
I'm confused.
Somebody, help me.
I'm confused.
Please, somebody, please love me.
Anybody....

No reply....
I must go now,
Find my own way,
Put my mind to rest,
Away from confusion.
Let them know that to be
With them is to be....

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by Toyo Mori

1979. Micronesian Reporter. Volume 27, No. 3. Saipan. TTPI Information Office

This Island

I know this island
I watch her raped by wind
Her fruit spread to rot
Washed by the sea's water

She will regain her past
Slightly altered
To produce again
Become herself again

I know this island
I watch her raped by man
Her mountains altered
Man will not allow her past
But will deflower
Till she is a worn whore
Her self lost and unwanted

Kit Porter

Ramarui, Hermana. 1984. The Palauan Perspectives. Copy at the Pacific Collection. Hamilton Library. U.H. Manoa

BEING A PALAUAN

Palauan, not a thing,
But a state of being,
Is capability
And is freedom.
It is a being
Equipped to act
And to react.
A center in itself
It hangs onto nothing.
It takes freely
As it sees fit.
It discard freely
When no longer needs.
It is freedom
It is ability
To use and discard
Act and face
New Realities.
It is dynamic
And it grows
In many directions.
A person's just a person,
Palauaness is a state
This person hangs on to.
This person ceases to be Palauan
As soon as he fears new learning.
Palauaness recognizes changes
As part of its growth.
And it sheds skins when necessary.
It recognizes its identity and
Adds new skin to itself each day.
It is inventive and adoptive
And employs new terms along the way.
It looks to the past only for advise.
The basket of today is
What it preys on.
It welcomes new techniques,
As means to achieve,
And make firm, efficiently,
The essence of its being,
The foundation it needs,
To explore the future.

Ramarui, Hermana. 1984. The Palauan Perspectives. Copy at the Pacific Collection. Hamilton Library. U.H. Manoa

CALLS OF YOUTH

Give us birth, my elders.
Stop the colonial web.
Open the door to freedom.
Cut that binding string.
Unity is imprisonment.
Hope for self gover'nt is you.
You have long been imprisoned.
It was not your choice.
Cut the umbilical cord
Our link to foreign womb.
The birth canal is yours
Either to open or to close.
Open it you must, dear elders,
So that I may be born and live.
Or closed it you could and
And the curse will fall on me.
Let me live as my ancestors did.
Give your grandchildren a life
Different from that which you had.
Stars of national awareness
Are now shining on our door steps.
Submit to the call of our national stars.
Gives us freedom our wise ones.
Let our nation be born.
Don't let the stars eclipsed again.
The period of darkness
Has been much too long.
Don't let the seeds of your wisdom
Escape from our awareness forever.

Ramarui, Hermana. 1984. The Palauan Perspectives. Copy at the Pacific Collection. Hamilton Library. U.H. Manoa

FREEDOM

America,
A giantman
Is fishing
In a U.S. made
Fish pond
Called Micronesia.

Who does things
For nothing?
Who does things
For absolute
Altruistic
Purposes?
For every give
There's a return
One way or
Another.

What America does
Is not just
A one way benefit
Not just for the
Micronesians.
What America wants
Regardless of what
America says
And Micronesia
Thinks
Only America knows.

For men do things
Not for nothing.
Men do things
For some reasons
Known or unknown.
Even if
What they do
Is just a game
To be played
Just for fun,
It still yields
Some returns
One way or
Another.

Micro is hooked
By the littlest
The weakest hook
Of the greatest
And the strongest
Nation
The world ever had
As history recalls.

A school of fish is
In that fish pond.
Does America need
Or need not
This school of fish?
Only America knows.
America has thrown
Its fish hooks
The silver hooks
And caught the fish
By the mouth.

Micronesia
Is hooked
For preying upon
A tiny bait
On a silver hook
Cause it was greedy
And it was blind
And it was weak
To do anything
But yield and bow
And kiss the hands
Of those
Who saw it
Uncivilized.
And those who
Thought it
Uncivilized,
Thought it
Uncivilized,
Because
They only saw it
Through their own
Uncivilized Spectacles.

And Micronesia
Bit the hook
And bit the bait
With open mouth.
And Micronesia
Swallowed the hook
And swallowed the bait
With open heart.

Now hooked Micro is
Fighting to be loose.
But perhaps cannot
For it knows not
How to unhook
Its own mouth
And remove
The tiny hook
Held by the strong
And giant fisherman.
Perhaps the fisherman
Is the only one
Who knows how
To loosen the hook
And to let free
The hooked fish.

For the Americans
Who claim to be
Of great service
And often imply
Their indispensable
Position,
This is a plea
For them
To view the matter
With serious thought
And educated mind
And civilized heart
To see the true color
Of Micronesia.

^o
Rmarui, Hermana. 1984
_A

FREEDOM (cont'd)

For these Americans
Let it be made clear
That
With limited eyes
And
With limited mind
They are aware only
Of one Micronesia,
The Micronesia
Of their making,
The Micronesia the
Excellent example
Of the poor arts,
The creation
Of uncivilized hands
Of the so called
Civilized man.

This is Micronesia
That is hooked
And placed in the pond,
The aquarium in the Pacific.
This is Micronesia
That was once prevented
From eating foods
Other than what
The fisherman provides
And therefore survives
Only by what the fisherman
Wishes to provide.
This is Micronesia
The ADDICTED
By the strongest pusher.
The world has ever known.

So America
You are
Indispensable
Only because you
Have made yourself so.
Perhaps I was a fool
Who saw the headlight
Of what was believed to be
Civilization
And took it
For its face value;
And did not know
Civilization
Comes in different
Shapes and textures
For different
Purposes.
Mine is round
While yours is square.
Mine is smooth
While yours have
Pointed corners
That can hurt
And hurt badly.
Perhaps I was weak,
Nevertheless your bait
Was attractive
And I was curious.
You hooked me
By the mouth and
No matter how hard
I struggle to be free
I cannot
For it hurts me
To free my own self.
As long as you hold me
The way you do
You are indispensable.
You have transplanted
New heart in me.
You have transfused
New blood into my veins.
How can I be free of you.
You and I are at the
The point of no return.

Ramarui, Hermana. 1984

FREEDOM (cont'd)

Dip your tail
My mermaid and
Merman friend
In this water,
In which
I've been swimming
Since time immemorial,
Before you tell me
How to swim in it.

Micro, the U.S. made
Fish pond
Sits on the world's
Biggest lake,
The Pacific Ocean.
And Micro stands looking
With mistrusting eyes
At generous provider
And looking with
Envious eyes
At sister fishes
Swimming freely
Eating meager food
That they earn
By the sweat
Of their brows
In the surrounding
Pacific Water.

America, the great
Do compromise with me
Since I cannot become you
Nor can you become a fish.
Throw your golden hooks away.
You really don't need them
To catch a little thing like me.
Neither do you need to
Catch me nor hold me.
But since you caught me
And void my values and ways
I have become a parasite
Your responsibility.
Let us evolve and let there
Be no fisherman and let
The fish be not for games
Which I have been a victim
And you're a victor.
Let you and I be
Mermaids and mermen
Playmates and play fair
Especially for my sake.

Let me live in living sea
And not in the aquarium.
Don't be just a spectator
But come swim with me.
Don't attempt to teach me
How to swim in the water
I've lived for years.
Simply come if you wish
As a guest not a conqueror
And share your bread with me.
But please let me put it
In my own mouth by myself
For it is my territory
And I know exactly how
To deal with it.

So America,
The beautiful
The powerful
The great and
The ugly,
Let us come to terms
With each other.
We're travelling
To the future together
And we've travelled thru a
Peaceful and troubled sea.
We didn't get
Into it together.
You imposed yourself
I was violated.
Nevertheless what is done
Cannot be undone
Because you made me like you
And I still do,
But in a different way
Not in the way
You've been holding me.

Dip yourself in the water
With the tail
You took from me.
Come swim with the fish.
If you think we're hungry
And wet and cold cause
We're down here
Simply give us
What we ask
To suit our new heart
To suit your pride and
To ease your urge

Ramarui, Hermana, 1984

FREEDOM (cont'd)

To relieve those you
Judge to be poor.
Reserve your
Value judgements
For until after
You've spent sometimes
Down here in the water
To realize being wet
Is not unpleasant
Being in the water means
Neither hunger nor cold
And to stay dry in the water
Is a clear impossibility.

Perhaps by then
You'll decide
Your advice
Your instructions
Your wisdom
Your values
Your recipe
And formula of life
ARE NOT totally fit.
America,
We are your
Responsibility
Whether
We like it or not.
But things need not
~~Look the way~~
They have been.
Unhook me and let me free.
The game is over and
My pain should be over.
It will be very difficult
To be free all of a sudden
But I can make it still
With your help perhaps
But not in the way
It has been.

It would be nice
To have you always
As a friend,
As colleague
And most of all
A provider.
But I sure hate
Having you
Holding me
The way you
Have been
In that overdue
Pregnancy and
In that burning
Colonial womb.

Give me birth
And freedom
And hold me as
You would
Those with rights
Equal to yours.
Liberate me
From your womb
And welcome me
To a new dawn
Where I can
Reincarnate
And be able
In a temper
Of freedom
Greet you
GOOD MORNING
AMERICA!

Ramarui, Hermana. 1984. The Palauan Perspectives. Copy at the Pacific Collection. Hamilton Library. U.H. Manoa

PALAUAN CULTURE

Culture!
Maintain it, they say.
I say, please tell me.
What is Palauan culture?

Palauan culture is
A state of being.
It is people
Living and growing.

Palauan culture
Is alive.
It is now, not
Yesterday nor before.

Palauan culture
Of yesterday is death,
Because it runs short
Of the needs of today,
Of Palauan people
Who live today.
These people are culture.

Treat the past
As it suppose to be
Our folly is that
We try to recreate
By trying to duplicate
The impractical past
Whose songs are
Out of tune.

Ramarui, Hermana. 1984. The Palauan Perspectives. Copy at the Pacific Collection. Hamilton Library. U.H. Manoa

THE AWAKENING

The wisdom 'n intellects
The arts of leadership
The industriousness
These dominant traits
Of Palauan people and
Their living constitution
Has long been dormant
Has long been buried
Under the domination
Of foreign nations.
Let these traits
Be our safeguards
In crossing the bridge
We must go through
To reach freedom
From colonialism.
National awareness
Had not been felt
By Palauan people for
A hundred years
Or more.

The separatist movement
Caused by national awareness
Is a mark that Palau
Is coming of age
And is recognizing
Its unique image
In the midst
Of surrounding
Similar islands.
And her cry to be free
Is the cry to be loosened
From that artificial tie
Called Unity of Micronesia
Which attempts to tie them
As one solid entity
Disrespecting the big water
Dividing them from one another.
The separatist movement
Is a mature awareness
Of the artificial
And mythical concept
No legend can support.

The separatist recognizing
The dreamy nature 'n fantasy
Of the dream nation
Called Micronesian nation,
Fights to separate itself
In order to promote
Internal unity 'n strength.
Only through separation can
Palau be born a nation
So Palauans may build
And live and enjoy
The dignity of being
Self governed.
This is the ultimate goal
And the valuable quest and
Palauan is breaking away
To make it possible.

Unity of Micronesia
Denies the awareness
And the inherent rights
Of Palauan people
To rule their island.
Palau wants to separate
Out of its own self respects
And its believe that
Other districts deserve
To live their life
Free of other's charges,
And that weak islands, united,
Cannot make a strong nation.
In unity Palau will never
Raise itself as a nation,
For it will use for crutches
Nations as weak as itself.
Unity breeds dependency.
Unity breeds hatred.
And Palau knows
Dependency and hatred
Are detrimental to growth
Especially to a nation
That had just hatched out
From colonial egg to freedom.

Ramarui, Hermana. 1984

THE AWAKENING (cont'd)

Palau is avoiding
Being used as a crutch
Out of realization
Of its own limited
Strength 'n capacity,
And out of awareness
That such a situation
Can only prolong the
Pattern of colonial web
Which will only cause
For palauan people
A retarded pace of growth
That will block Palauan aims
Which are internal autonomy
And self government.

Palau stands at
The crossroads
Deciding which road
It should take.
The COM current
Beats constantly
Against the door
That leads to separation.
Palauans more than ever
Fight whole heartedly
To take Palau away
From foreign hands.

Save Palau for Palauans
Save Palau from foreigners
And keep Palau in the hands
Of those who love it dearly,
The Palauans themselves,
Is the aim, the constant cry
Especially of those
Who trust and believe
That Palau is ready
To carry its own
Responsibilities.

And so while
The separatists
In attempt to grab
The land from
Foreign rules,
Claim they're saving
Palau for Palauans,
The unity movement
Fight just as hard
Putting it back
Into the hands
Of foreigners,
Claiming to save Palau
From local corruptions.

And because of
Fear and mistrust
The unity movement
Pledge itself
To make unity stay
Once and for all.
For this very reason
Palau was divided.
The strength attached
To the paramounts
Reinforced the unity force.
The calls of the chiefs
Are calls hard to reject.
Because of this
The margin was
Of 55% to 45%
In favor of separation.
The fight to separate
Was hard and tough
And the value though
Marginal at best
Was nevertheless
Strong and heavy.

Ramarui, Hermana. 1984. The Palauan Perspectives. Copy at the Pacific Collection. Hamilton Library. U.H. Manoa

THE UNFINISHED

You introduced to us
The world you know.
Why not with proper plan?
Why not with assurance?

You show us things,
Things we like and
Things we could use,
But not with assurance.

These are not enough.
Critical tune won't stop.
There're needs yet to follow.
Savage are trained to sing on 'n on.

If you hear critical tune,
It's not for what you've done
It's for what you haven't done.
Expectations are your making.

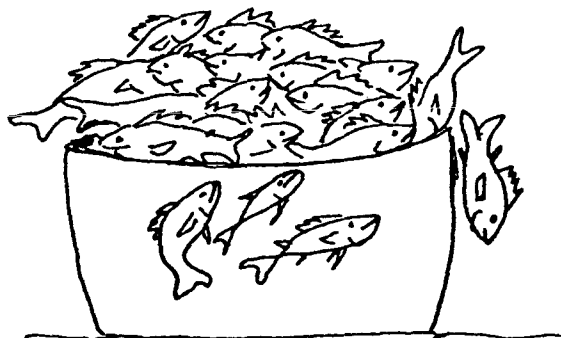
If you've no plans to prepare for
Needs and wants that come after,
Why expose us to your world
In the first place?

Songs of wild are critical songs.
These are songs that have meanings.
Noble savage sings with mixed-up tunes.
Many things they want to hang on to.

1979. Mirror of Life. Volume 1. Moen, Truk. Truk Education Department

WHERE DO I GO?

A big house it seemed.
 Here I stayed.
 Here I slept.
 Here I ate and played.
 But times must change
 And so have we.
 From small to big
 I have become.
 From big to small
 The house remains the same
 No more.



A big village it seemed.
 Here I shared.
 Here I worked.
 Here I loved and cared.
 But times must change
 And so have we.
 From small to big
 I have become.
 From big to small
 The village can provide
 No more.

A big island it seemed,
 Where I used to stay,
 Where I used to sleep,
 Where I used to eat and play.
 But times must change
 And so have we.
 I've left my home and village,
 I've left my island too.
 I'm still adrift and lost.
 I'm looking for A BIGGER PLACE.
 Where do I go from now???

by Aritae Reynold

1979. Mirror of Life. Volume 1. Moen, Truk. Truk Education Department

YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

Yesterday
I worked so hard
With my hands.
I washed my clothes
In a cold stream.
Yesterday
I lived in a soft, brown world,
I ate from the earth,
The food tasted familiar
But not as sweet.

Today
I work
But not as hard.
My man-made hands
Do it.
Today
I live
In a tough, white world,
Someone feeds me,
The food tastes unfamiliar
But sweet.

Tomorrow--
(Yawn)
Relax!
No more
Work,
Just a lot
Of fun.
Tomorrow
May be
A very strange
New World???

Yesterday
And today
Are different.
So will be
Tomorrow.
Yesterday I crawled.
Today I walk
And even run.
Tomorrow
I will probably
Fly.

by Pres Sablan

Samuel, Koachy. 1978. Echoes of the Trukese Culture. Moen, Truk.
Truk High School

WHICH IS WHICH?

Who am I?
Where am I?
I can't seem to find the answers.
I don't know where I belong.
I don't know where to go.

I remember just one time,
The time I had two angels.
Both were good advisors
And told me who I was
And where I belonged.

The first advisor helped me.
He told me many things.
He told me to follow him.
He told me what was good
Which was truly good for me.

The second advisor helped me too.
He told me many things.
He told me to follow him.
He told me what was good
Which was truly bad for me.

I don't know which advisor to follow.
I think I'm lost.
I don't know where to go.
My trouble leads me
To only one place--hell!

Sengebau, Val. 1977. "Rairecharmoracherchar". In Micronesia Reporter. Volume 25, No.4.

I'm going to relate this epic legend
About the original tribes
Of courageous men, women , and children
Who in the darkness of time
Dared to dream lofty dreams
Of adventures and discoveries
And so following the current
Of the mighty seas
And direction of the trade wind
Of the sky
And guided by the moon, sunsets & fixed stars
Set sail from their distant land
Braving gales and thunderstorms
Amidst the towering & malevolent swells
And mercilessly tossed about in the foam
Suffering the scourge of heavenly torches
And the chilling & freezing night winds
Accompanied by the mounting pangs
Of hunger and thirst
Survived the herculean ordeal
Safely arrived on these thousand isles
In the golden sun where no man abided.
They were discreet to inherit these lands
Not by hostile act of force and violence
But by the guiding lights
Of good fortune skill and endurance
And the blessing of their god and ancestors.
They became the first Man
To inhabit the lands of a thousand isles.
They tamed and tilled the soils
Built dwelling houses, canoe huts & Bai's
Enacted laws for peace and harmony
And shared the bounties of the land and sea.
A new society was born
And the inhabitants called it
"Beluman", Our homeland.
And so thru the eons of time
While peace and comfort prospered,
Commuting and migration ceased.
However, an occasional expedition was made
and some drifters from afar rescued.
When the isolation became astute
Variance among the brethren

Dwelling in the sun emerged
And thus evolved the differences
In cultures, customs & languages
With time blunting and eroding
The oneness in the beginning of time.
Then the epoch of intruders came.
On their monstrous & gigantic canoes
With many huge sails, they appeared
Where the sun went to sleep
At the end of the western sky

They plundered and raped
The inhabitants, land and sea
And further claimed the thousand isles
In the name of their god and kings.
There were inquisitors to save the heathens
And Kaiser's boys lusting for minerals and copra
And children of the rising sun to colonize.
And stars and stripes for the international peace.
They all left deep and permanent scars
And each scar was deeper than the last
Until the entire populace
Of the thousand isles in the sun
Became the nation of sheep
Without the shepherds of old.
Then a pack of wolves descends
Among the herd & devours a good meal.
Slowly and silently the prey & predator
Become one through digestion.
There was no other sound
Except the lapping & swishing
Of the waves hugging the shore
And the rising of the new moon tide
Bringing broken zories, plastic bags
And aluminum coke and beer cans
To the immaculate beach.
There are also a few tracks on the sand
And scattered skeletal remains
Bleached in the golden sun
Awaiting resurrection or reincarnation.
Of new genesis to build a new nation.

1977. Micronesian Reporter. Volume 25, No.3. Saipan. TTPI Information Office

THE WATCHER

by Val Sengebau

*I've watched that boy
With intense interest
And attentive affection
Since he was an urchin.
He caught my fancy
When he began exploring
Around the house
And the yard on four's
And then on two's
Like an investigating scientist.
The parents called him, Ngak.
Ngak mimicked everyone
Around and about
Without any fence.
He was everyone's pet.
He grew up happy and strong
Loved by everyone
And returned their love.
When Ngak left for school
Way beyond the horizon
Everyone cried
Including his dog, Bilis
His pig, Babii
And his rooster, Malk.
Many new and full moons came and left
And the evening star
Changed places with the morning star
And dry and wet spells
Waltzed in and out
With occasional typhoon-puffs.
Then one typical day
Ngak arrived
Thin, tall and grown up.*

*And to everyone's dismay
He sported long hair
Like the island's girls,
And wearing darkies
As if repelled
By the sight of his his homeland.
Ngak kept to himself
Reading into the nights
Talking to himself in his sleep
 of girls in mini-skirts
 of strange canoes called cars
 of concrete roads call Hi-ways
 of tall crowded houses
 of different foods
Not taro, breadfruit, and fish.
When the next full moon tide
Flooded the shore
Ngak packed his strange luxuries
And left.
No one saw him off
Nor cried.
Some claimed he went to his education
But his people gave no attention.
Only I, coconut tree, know
Because I drifted across the sea
To this land
And was planted by Ngak's house.
I watch and see everything
And only speak through nature.
I miss Ngak
That poor boy.
But he may return one day
I hope.*

Sengebau, Val. 1979. Micronesian Reporter. Volume 27, No.2. Saipan.
TTPI Information Office

NGAK

I took my leave from my beloved land
Suffocated with deep emotional turbulence
And not knowing where to land
But my sight was over the horizon
Seeking for intellectual solace
Among strangers in the foreign land.
I left my country
For I was mentally starved in the mute silence
Among my blood brothers, I felt strange.
My life was flooded with contradiction
For I've become victim of my education
Without knowing the burden of its intoxication.
I've become a man with split personality
And the two identities have complexity
That cannot find solace and amnesty.
My heart yearns for its birthrights
Where my umbilical cord is rooted deep in the soil
Lulled by its cultural heritage
For there simple things are joy
And luxuries are necessity
And the sounds of nature are music.
But alas, I've drunk deep from the Pierian spring
And now the thirst for knowledge is ever consuming
Demanding far wider and deeper understanding
Of man, nature, world, universe and cosmos.
Yet knowledge is fathomless
And my search is no less
To touch the shore of my reach
Where my heart and head can live in peace.

Shirai, Elvis. 1979. Mirror of Life. Volume 2 Moen, Truk. Truk Education Department

DISSATISFIED

To build a Trukese house,
And finish it with Trukese decoration,
That's what he wanted
For it.

To know what goes inside the house,
And make good use of it,
That's what he wanted
From it.

Ah, it was then finished!
It looked beautiful.
That's what he thought
About it.

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It has been a long time!
The house is getting older,
That's what he thinks
About it.

To travel but far away,
And search for foreign design,
That's what he does
For it.

To come back home
And beautify it with different things,
That's what he does
To it....

1975. The Three Towers. November 12. Moen, Truk. Xavier High School

"MICRONESIAN COPRA"

The Spanish came
They sprouted us
The Germans came
They husked us
The Japanese came
They removed our shell
Now, we are only soft meat
The Americans will surely eat us.

by: Theo Thinnifel '76

1979. Micronesian Reporter. Volume 26, No.1. Saipan. TTPI Information Office

WHO?

*Who are they that come to our isle
to change the machas to their "so-called" style?
Who are they that unchained the latch
of ways of living, like the abandoned taro patch?
Who are they to give us the eye
and call us strange if we sit in the abai?
Who are they with greedy hands,
to pollute our gardens and rock isle sands?
Who are they, to scorn us with a snort,
after all aren't we the ones who dream of a superport?*

by Anne M. Udui

1979. Micronesian Reporter. Volume 26, No.1. Saipan. TTPI Information Office

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